

Chapter 10

Turkey's Public Diplomacy and Digital Communication Tools

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the functional and pragmatic aspects of public diplomacy in Turkey are emphasized. The chapter tries to determine which values of Turkey are highlighted in the public diplomacy perspective. In general terms, it has been argued that the digital communication is an ideological understanding of public diplomacy practices or that the understanding that national interests are held in the forefront is heavy. In this study, two questions were asked in order to establish Turkey's public diplomacy perspective. The first question is What are the messages of Turkey to international community and foreign people in the digital age? The second question is How does Turkey communicate its message to the international community and foreign people in digital age and what tools do they use in this process? The answers to these questions were sought in general. The identified research questions were searched by digital applications, institutions' use of new media, and speech of person of government.

INTRODUCTION

A country's soft power elements are greatly important to it establishing influence in the minds of the general public of foreign nations as they can be transformed into means of communication and allow states to reach the public spontaneously and to be present in foreign media to inform the public opinion. In this regard, Turkey is discovering its own soft power and establishing this power in different regions of the world. Certainly, in the context of public diplomacy, activating Turkey's soft power and allowing it to express itself to the world affects its image. Therefore, with its public diplomacy and soft power policies, Turkey has been in a position to build its own image for the first time. The goal is to change global perceptions to restore Turkey's image. The most appropriate means and method for this is public diplomacy because the main thing here is to address the public, not the states.

Turkey is making efforts to represent itself in a better light to the world, especially to its neighboring countries, within the framework of soft power elements. Dominating domestic politics in recent years

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in Turkey, the rhetoric of becoming an actor on a global scale is reflected in its foreign policies as well. Accordingly, Turkey as a subject has started to explain its policies, cultural properties and soft power elements to the foreign public with a pragmatic perspective in those regions where it has historical ties.

Turkey is making relative progress on issues such as democracy, human rights, individual freedom and equality. However, Western countries find Turkey to be lacking in key issues. At this point, Turkey's negative results cannot refresh the image formed in the past and are unable to correct the perception that arises (Özkan, 2015, p. 17). Turkey's image and perceptions of Turkey in the public opinion are contrasting and independent of each other in different geographical regions. Therefore, Turkey needs to transmit different messages to each region in its public diplomacy efforts.

This study analyzes the institutions and instruments used in Turkey to communicate cultural policies to target audiences in terms of digital communication. The first part of the study presents a literature review in the field of public diplomacy, and therefore examines the concept of soft power. The research part of the study includes opinions from the managers of institutions that communicate cultural properties in Turkey, and analyzes the contents of web sites and the social media accounts of these institutions. Finally, the study takes an overall picture of Turkey's cultural properties, in terms of digital communication, and suggests possible activities within a digital perspective.

THE CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Globalization, the collapse of the USSR and the collapse of the Berlin Wall, coupled with the rapid development of communication technologies have brought about a change in traditional diplomacy. In the wake of the Cold War and in the multi-polar world of the new international system, diplomacy represents more than a profession, with diplomats acting as multi-layered concepts. Average citizens have become actors in diplomatic activities and have begun to play a role in international relations. These developments reveal the need for countries to develop communication strategies that target the public sphere of other countries in the international community in their foreign policy work. This evolution in diplomacy has given rise to a field that is called public diplomacy (Yağmurlu, 2007, pp. 12; Sancar, 2014, p. 1).

Having been mentioned for the first time in 1960s, it was only in 1990s that the concept of public diplomacy began to be considered as a functional instrument to solve diplomatic problems, and as an activity of states to inform and influence foreign societies. Today, on the other hand, other different components have been included in this framework. The activities of governmental and private organizations which extend beyond nations, such as tourism, sports, trade, the Internet, fashion, news, and political leaders, are considered within this framework (Nye 2005, pp. 8; Varoğlu, 2013, p. 1; Yılmaz, 2012, p. 222). In terms of its aims, it is seen that the public diplomacy contains all of the components that constitute societies (Bozkır, 2013, pp. 32).

Public diplomacy refers to the skill that enables us to create a meaningful story and communicate it to the target audience using effective communication strategies. Countries who can create good stories, and show effective story telling skills, are known to be more persuasive and gain the sympathy of societies (Özkan, 2015, p. 23). Public diplomacy as a strategic communication tool is defined as the sum of activities which seek to "understand, inform and influence the public". The purpose of public diplomacy is not propaganda. Public diplomacy is meant to build a strategic language of communication based on objective facts and facts and to present it to the service of different sectors. Public diplomacy activities

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